

## **Child Services Oversight Committee 2015-16 Annual Report**

### **Task Force Chair: Senator Carlin Yoder**

#### **Priorities:**

The top priority of the Child Services Oversight Committee is to support the well-being of Hoosier children by strengthening the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS). In the past, DCS has been questioned for lacking transparency and open communication concerning potential threats to children. Over the last year, the DCS Oversight Committee addressed these and the below issues to increase transparency and supporting Hoosier children all across the state.

#### **Members**

- Senator Carlin Yoder
- Mary Beth Bonaventura, Director, Department of Child Services
- Leslie Dunn, Indiana CASA Director, Division of State Court Administration
- Sean McCrindle, Vice President of Program Operations, Bashor Children's Home
- Suzanna O'Malley, Prosecuting Attorney Council
- Representative Gail Riecken
- Jolene Bracale, Program Coordinator for Student Health, Department of Education
- Larry Landis, Executive Director, Indiana Public Defender Council
- Honorable Stephen Galvin, Monroe County Circuit Court

#### **Meetings**

June 9, 2015

October 8, 2015

April 12, 2016

#### **Accomplishments of Past Year**

The following include presentations and committee accomplishments from the past year:

Collaborative Care Update. Lisa Rich, DCS Deputy Director of Services & Outcomes-

Indiana's Collaborative Care system is an extension of foster care until the youth turns 20 years of age. Most are in high school, post-secondary programs, college or apply on a need basis while pursuing their career post-education. Currently, the main focus is developing a plan for youth who age out of care. By developing practical skills while in the program, these kids will be able to apply themselves when they go into the world. Skill development services are used for case management by service providers as well. The continuum of care includes: services for younger youth in care, services plus foster care for older youth as well as voluntary services without foster care, which is a safety net for older youth ages 20-21.

The interdependent fostering program works to ensure no youth leaves care without a caring, committed adult connection. When obstacles occur, these children need someone to rely on. Who will be that adult in the community that acts as a mentor or support system? This aspect of the program is as important as or more so than the skills they develop. The interdependent program recognizes teachable moments, which include inevitable moments a youth will encounter throughout life. By preparing for these obstacles, youth will develop life skills and learn from their experiences and mistakes alike. Collaborate Care also works with the Department of Workforce Development in an effort to find jobs for our high school and college graduates.

All Collaborate Care programs aim to give positive outcomes for Indiana's youth once they're out of care. Therefore, the focus on supporting our kids as they go through high school. The program has a total of 659 youth and 161 will graduate this year with their high school diploma. Indiana should be very proud of these numbers, but the next goal is focusing on the ability of our youth to not only attend college, but to stay in college and get their degrees once they get there.

The specialized case manager program provide positive youth development, youth voice, authentic youth and adult partnership, adolescent brain development and trauma informed care. These specialized caseloads address trauma and focus on developing the youth's plan for education, long-term housing, employment, etc. Indiana DCS focuses on long-term housing, not transitional housing. It is Indiana's position to assist youth with developing the skills and resources needed to sustain long-term housing through services.

Deloitte Field Workload Analysis. Doris Tolliver, DCS Chief of Staff-

Deloitte looked at a wide range of data and information, but primarily the current case load and internal operations to give need-based recommendations. They used focus groups through child welfare information systems to process mapping to find opportunities to improve overall operations. The study showed case load standards on not consistent on a statewide basis. The analysis identified both long-term and short-term process and procedural changes likely to be strongly correlated with meeting the current 12/17 caseload standard. Deloitte identified several efficiencies that should, over time, reduce the number of FCMs needed to best care for our children. Director Bonaventura is committed to ensuring that field staff have manageable caseloads to ensure safety to children and families across the state. DCS will work with the legislature and the administration to implement recommendations made in the study, which are as follows:

1. Improve current caseload calculation for 12/17 standards by reviewing definitions for ongoing caseloads and focus on improving the method used to calculate assessment workload.
2. Case closure initiative designs a case closure initiative to help monitor and manage backlogs.
3. Increase worker skill and use of technology by created better training initiatives for FCMs.

4. Use workforce analytics to identify current and forecasted staffing needs, and build a recruitment and retention strategy.
5. Realignment of FCM duties by identifying routine FCM duties and realign resources to better support FCMs.

6. Implement a performance management methodology for the case lifecycle, including a routine pipeline analysis and performance metrics to provide insight into critical trends and patterns.
7. Better familiarize supervisors with institutional data resources and train them in data-informed management practices.
8. Design improved training to include employee development techniques, focusing on mentoring and management strategies.
9. Devise a set of evidence-informed criteria to promote consistent statewide use.
10. Creating a project management office to provide oversight and governance is critical to implementing the other efficiencies identified in Deloitte's analysis.

In regards to the increase of CHINS cases, we are trying to manage the burden. We need to better understand the cause of the increase to find a solution. Substance abuse is a major problem and treatment facilities are very limited in some areas of the state so this poses a huge issue. We are currently proceeding with thoughtful planning and staging for this problem.

#### Update from CASA. Leslie Dunn, Indiana State Director GAL/CASA

I want to thank the support of this committee, Senator Yoder, Senator Broden and Representative Reicken for the Child Advocacy programs and funding efforts. This is the first increase for the program since 2007. As of July 1, 2015, the State Office of GAL/CASA will receive an additional \$2.1 million dollars in funding from the Indiana General Assembly, for a total appropriation of \$5 million dollars. These funds will be used to build capacity in the 76 local GAL/CASA programs across the State, to start new programs in several counties, and to expand the work of the State Office of GAL/CASA, with the ultimate goal of serving more children and reducing the list of children waiting for a GAL/CASA volunteer.

The GAL/CASA Advisory Commission has a Capacity Building Committee and this Committee, as well as all of the local GAL/CASA program directors, have met on several occasions to discuss and develop plans for building capacity in the network. These plans include the following:

☐ Optima Case Management System-roll-out optima case management system to all programs in the state, including data conversion and training.

□ State Office Position-the job description has been completed and an ad will be posted later this month. We plan on conducting interviews and hiring for the new position by August 2015.

□ Capacity Building at Local Level: Capacity Building Grants-Develop and get approval of grant process for distribution of new funding in the form of capacity building grants.

□ Capacity Building Activities at the State and Local Levels-pursue strategic partnerships with other organizations, such as the Nurses Association, businesses and churches, both at the state and local levels.

IARCA Outcome Measures Project. Cathleen Graham, IARCA Executive Director, and Mark Hess, Outcome Project Coordinator

For 15 years, member agencies of the Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy have worked collectively to provide outcome data for the thousands of children they serve.

IARCA was previously the Indiana Association of Residential Child Care Agencies and also did business as IARCCA, an Association of Children & Family Services, over the years covered in this report. The IARCA Outcome Measures Project emerged from the efforts of a group of agency volunteers whose goals were to develop outcome measures that would:

- Highlight the needs of Indiana's children and families referred for services
- Improve programs in response to an individual agency's results at discharge and follow-up
- Allow for benchmarking of performance with an aggregate of the data by program type
- Provide a better understanding of the broader issue of children's services to strengthen advocacy efforts on behalf of children and families

IARCA's external evaluators present information for three program types across 15 years of data collection through a Special Report Brief. Many practice implications have resulted from 15 years of data collection. The vast majority of children using these services show measurable improvement in education and employment and a reduction in problem behavior, court involvement, and subsequent abuse. Results measured at follow-up demonstrate that these

improvements are sustained for months post-discharge. Children have experienced serious trauma prior to entering services. These include neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and exposure to domestic violence. Yet, despite these difficulties, the majority of children and families do succeed. This Special Report Brief includes data for 52,766 children who were assessed at intake over the past 15 years. The most frequently reported risk factors were parental substance abuse, child neglect, witnessing domestic violence, parent incarceration, physical abuse, sexual abuse and being from a single parent family. 47,392 children were assessed at discharge. Depending on the program type from which they were discharged: 62%-87% had a positive educational outcome; 55%-80% went to a less restrictive environment; and 35% and 68% had achieved their permanency goal. 24,852 children were assessed at follow-up. Depending on the program type from which they were discharged: 71%-97% had a positive educational outcome at follow-up; 91%-100% had no new child abuse reported; and 52%-98% had no court involvement due to new offenses.

The Outcome Measures Project is a cross-agency outcomes project developed to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services provided by participating agencies. Data on youth and families served have been collected continuously since 1998. The three Outcome Measures Programs:

1. Transitional Living
2. Foster Care
3. Residential Care

Our future goals represent an expansion of collaboration, expansion of academic contacts and research, family strength based assessment tool, consultation with individual agencies regarding use of data, collaborative conference 2015 and special report briefs, which will include education, disproportionality, factors associated with achievement of positive outcomes. With



respect to outcomes for youth placed into Residential Care, Foster Care and Transitional Living, all three programs were likely to return youth to a similar or less restricting placement following care. Youth were also planfully discharged from their programs at a rate similar to their movement into a less restrictive placement. While approximately 25% of youth in FC programs were administratively discharged between 1998 and 2002, this rate has decreased to below 20% for the last either years examined (2005 through 2012). Youth in all three programs were also likely to have reported positive educational outcomes at discharged, as determined by school attendance, appropriate behavior and/or achievement. In addition, youth contacted at follow-up maintained positive educational outcomes by either attending school or having graduated. Also at follow-up, youth in all three program types had low rates of subsequent reports of being subject to additional abuse or being returned to court for a new infraction.

#### DCS Agency Update: Director Mary Beth Bonaventura-

On July 1, 2015, DCS received funds for 117 new Family Case Managers. By July 27th, all of these positions had been filled. I would like to take my hat off to all of the staff and state personnel staff for the recruitment to fill these positions as all 92 counties had some kind of need. In August, the Governor asked for 113 additional positions based on the numbers of incoming cases. Upon this request, 32 positions have been filled and we are seeking to fill the remaining spots. We also have developed and rolled out a new ABP program. This program will allow every employee to have the opportunity to meet with a counselor for three separate issues, not all work related. If an employee has issues at home or the workplace, they will be given the opportunity to discuss with the counselor to talk through them. This is provided through insurance coverage, which is a much needed program based on the high stress and intensity of the work environment. We are one of the first agencies in the nation to provide this through our

program. DCS implemented this program started July 1 of this year. I have also been informed this will roll over to all other state agencies in the future due to its instant success.

In spite of our efforts, our Family Case Manager turnover has increased. However, we are 1 of 12 child welfare programs in the country that was chosen by the National Welfare Institute for a grant to review the workforce. The review will be conducted by the National Welfare Institute in partnership with IUPUI. Indiana is currently one of the lowest turnover rates in the country. For reference, Kentucky is at 36% and Wisconsin is at 46%, while Indiana is at 24%. Other states have approached us asking what retainment efforts we provide. With this in mind, DCS has issued a new recruitment plan. The BRSSP recruitment plan will address each counties needs by establishing a biennial plan. We will meet with each office twice a year to meet the needs in each community. This will allow us to focus on the need of each area instead of on a statewide basis. This will help with our five year Federal Review, which will take place next summer. As a result of the Deloitte Study, State personnel hired a dedicated recruiter to solely recruit for DCS positions. This will help greatly with the quality of our staff by specifically targeting geographic areas, based on need. The Deloitte study provided that 30% of the Family Case Manager responsibilities included administrative proceedings. We are now realigning their duties by hiring administrators so the FCM's can focus on the children and their cases. Of the 19,251 CHINS cases, 29.3% of these children remain in the home, 70.7% are taken of the home and of those taken of the home, 42% are placed with family members with 6.4% placed in residential case. Because of this, we are trying to build up Foster Care programs. Foster Care is becoming more complex, but we are identifying relatives that would be a great fit for the at-risk children. Therefore, we are trying to boost up our relative placement program where there is need.

Half Way Home. Sarah Houston Dicks, Attorney

Half Way Home is a non-profit which assists people with substance abuse problems, specifically women ages 18-60. Currently, there are no residential treatment facilities in the area. Because funding sources are limited, this organization is petitioning legislators in the area to fund their residential treatment facilities.

Half Way Home has no intention of overriding current programs but rather would like to work with current programs to solve substance abuse problems. However, because resources are limited to only those received through donations and grants, more financial assistance from the legislature is needed to help collaborate on and address these problems.

Half Way House offers classes every six weeks taught by professionals from the community who volunteer their time. Some of these classes are: a class on obtaining and retaining employment, a class on healthy meals, a class on emotional regulation and mindfulness, and a self-esteem class. One particularly important class instructs women on issues of sexual molestation. This is important because such a large number of women are in the substance abuse program and

many of them have children in the DCS program. This is for women who have only been in the program for fewer than six months, or 180 days, often coming from off of the street or directly out of prison.

This program also has a five year follow-up. The first reason to do this is to gather statistics which are used implementing the evidence-based program. This program evaluates them on their needs now versus when they first entered the program. This is done because many of these women don't think they have meaning or value to the community.

In terms of costs for residents, women must have jobs and pay a flat fee of \$125 per month. Due to the minimal funding a fee must be charged. This program is not designed enable these women but rather nurture their independence. Because of this objective, the five year follow-up was implemented.

Enrollment opened January 4. Three women walked in off the street, many were referred from prison or by word of mouth.

Half Way House representatives would like to meet with and work with DCS. However, this is not a housing program, it is a treatment program. They have already met with their local DCS provider.

#### Foster Care Update and Recruitment Efforts: Corinne Gilchrist, Deputy Director of Placement Support and Compliance-

The foster care program matches based on the best information available at the time. They are all about finding homes, which is more than just finding a bed. They are developing their community from the current foster care program. The focus is making sure they know the impact they are having on these children's lives.

“Foster parents give it their all. You are needed and have changed my life forever. Thank you for all you have done for me and my life.”

-Local Foster Child

Currently recruitment efforts are underway, which include partnerships with the Indianapolis Zoo, Children’s Museum, and Indiana Fever. There are many opportunities to meet someone and see what it means to be a foster parent. They are looking at ways to provide the intensive treatment necessary for foster care children in a home-like setting. There is a need for homes that are ready to implement intensive treatment and are willing to have more service providers in the home for more hours of the day.

This is the type of care that these kids need. They are asking a lot of foster care homes. This includes using the responsible, prudent parent system to analyze whether activities are age-

appropriate or not. Training and guidance are available to current and prospective foster parents. These training programs are occurring in June and July in Merrillville, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, and Evansville. They are looking at next years recruitment plan over the next month and are excited to double down on their efforts to get the word out about foster care.

Foster care licensing is provided through DCS. DCS was the only licensing entity 20 years ago. At that time there was a population of children that were very hard to place. At that time a third party expert took over this area of licensing. All foster programs then were the LCPA's. But in the last 5-10 years it has licensing has returned to DCS. The same qualifications apply in becoming a Foster Family are the same as they always have been.

DCS believes the need for quality foster families is urgent, but in certain areas of the state it is more desperate than others. They are attempting to use data analysis to focus on areas where there are gaps so that those areas can be targeted. New safe assessment analysis is targeting more quality foster care parents (Response from Senator Yoder's question regarding the shock of lack of quality applicants).

#### DCS Media Outreach. James Wide, DCS Communications Director-

DCS is inherently a responsive and pro-active agency. Communications is a unique division because they get to work with every department within DCS. May is National Foster Care Month. So they are using outreach tools such as radio web-mailers and outdoor billboards to recruit, retain, and honor our foster parents.

They are not only doing it in May, but also during the Christmas Holiday. The radio ads are going to start May 2 through May 29.

They are trying to reinforce the message of appreciation and choosing to be the difference in these foster children's lives using these advertisements.

DCS also started a Twitter Media and over-arching social media campaign. Pat McAfee is one of our spokespeople with Cardinal Ritter-Vontae Davis, an All Pro who also got involved in the Twitter Campaign.

Vontae Davis was a former foster youth-and now is an altruistic spokesman for DCS free of charge. People that are with them really get behind the cause. They are a responsive agency which is always responding to crises. However, this side of the agency is less well-known. The No place like home campaign is designed to promote the adoption of older youth. Recent efforts in this program have included: a redesign of presentation materials, targeted promotion, social media promotion and promotion of local career fairs. These are the four focal points of media outreach.

### **Current Action Plan**

Our current action plan includes the continued pursuit of strengthening Hoosier children through transparency and quick response to child abuse reports. The topics we plan to review in the next fiscal year are, but not limited to, as follows:

- Changing the role of probation consultants from approving placements to (1) resource consultants, (2) JDAI assistance and (3) educational purposes.
- The issue of CHINS cases showing up as Delinquency cases.
- Salary increases for DCS attorneys have helped in some areas of the state, but not all.
- There is still a high turnover rate among DCS case managers. Would informing CASA/GAL of the DCS case manager assignment or new assignment approve attrition?
- The root cause(s) of DCS case manager turnover must be determined and addressed. Some causes may be relationships with supervisors. DCS must do more to retain case managers.
- Judicial officers agree there has been an increase of CHINS cases statewide, what is the reasoning behind this? How can it be resolved?

- Should “status offenders” (i.e. runaway, incorrigible, chronic truants, curfew violators) be removed from the Delinquency code, and move them in the CHINS code?

### **Timeline for Achieving Stated Goals**

The Child Service Oversight Committee aims to achieve the stated goals at the end of the next fiscal year.

### **Recommendations for the Commission**

Judge Galvin offered the recommendation of doing a better job of public relations regarding Family Case Workers. These individuals see more pain and suffering of children than the average beat cop does in their entire time on the force. As the committee serving for Child Services Oversight, we strive to and recommend to do a better job of public relations for these people. What they’re doing is truly invaluable. Director Bonaventura spoke about how faces lit up when she came to visit different branches across the state. We need to make a conscious effort to reassure Family Case Workers and show them how important their job and commitment is to the children of our great state. We need to continue to make this a priority in the future.

### **Anticipated Next Steps**

Senator Yoder would like to thank all of the Child Service Oversight Committee members, old and new, for their efforts. He is excited about the initiatives in the works and what the future will hold. The committee’s next meeting will be scheduled by the committee’s schedule in September or October of 2016. Chairman Yoder will also be seeking his replacement because it will be the end of his term in November. He also publically would like to thank Representative Riecken and Senator Boden for their public service unwavering support for the children of Indiana.



